

deplorable. The Association therefore has propounded an excellent scheme designed to improve the education of a special class of workers for whom it proposes the title of Obstetric Nurses, and in the hope that in course of time these women will take the place of the obsolete midwife. Briefly, then, the scheme is, according to the Council of the Association, founded upon the following argument.

"That in order to lessen the dangers to which many parturient women are exposed from ignorant midwives, it is desirable that the practice of midwifery should be in the hands of medical practitioners; and in order to improve the education and usefulness of women engaged in midwifery work, and to bring such workers under the direct control and supervision of medical men, it is advisable that a grade of Obstetric Nurses should be formed."

In order to carry out these principles, the Council of the Association therefore recommends that the curriculum of education of such Nurses should comprise:—

(a) Two years' training in a general Hospital or institution recognised by the Association:

(b) At least three months' training in a lying-in Hospital, or in the lying-in wards of a Poor Law Infirmary.

(c) Nine months' additional training in a Hospital for women, or a lying-in Hospital, or in attendance upon midwifery cases under a medical man recognised by the Association.

(d) Evidence of having attended not less than thirty cases of labour.

Then it is suggested that the Association shall appoint an Examining Board, before whom candidates who have fulfilled the above curriculum might appear to be examined in (a) Elementary Anatomy, Physiology and Hygiene; (b) General Nursing; (c) Ordinary Midwifery. It is, to us, very interesting to observe that this important medical body has, in the curriculum which it has designed, recognised the importance of a previous training in general Nursing; and the completeness of the scheme which it has prepared and placed before the profession is deserving of the closest attention and support from all Nurses. As a necessary consequence of the examinations referred to, the Association proposes to grant, to those candidates who are successful, a certificate of "fitness to act as an Obstetric Nurse under medical supervision." And legal powers will be taken to enable the Association to withdraw this certificate from any of its Nurses who may prove hereafter to be unworthy of trust and of the serious responsibilities which may be confided to them. The fee for the examination and certificate is placed at one guinea—

the amount which is charged to its candidates by the London Obstetrical Society.

It appears to be believed by those who have proposed the scheme, that if it is carried into effect, a considerable number of medical practitioners in different parts of the country will give regular employment to Nurses so well qualified to assist them in their work. And the inevitable result would be that in many instances, the midwife of the district, working on her own account, would be replaced both in public estimation and professional support, by the newly-introduced, efficiently trained, and professionally supervised, Obstetric Nurse. The benefits to the public of such improved and more skilful attendants, are too evident to require additional argument.

But the advantages to trained Nurses in thus opening up for them a wide and practically unlimited field of work, at a very remunerative rate, requires, and will doubtless receive, the most careful attention of our readers. After all, the greatest argument in favour of this scheme, to our mind, is that it follows accurately upon the lines of the reform which has been already in progress. From all parts of the country we have heard of well trained Hospital Nurses, who have, after their general training was over, acquired special experience in a lying-in Hospital, and have then commenced to work as so-called midwives. Those who demand that the old fashioned Gamp should be retained, would, we feel confident, be much surprised if they would investigate the previous education and experience obtained by, say, the last five hundred diplomates of the London Obstetrical Society, because they would probably discover that a very considerable proportion of these women were really Trained Nurses. We are therefore strongly of opinion that the scheme proposed by the Incorporated Medical Practitioners' Associations is one which is not only honourable to those who have devised it, but which will be of the greatest benefit both to the Nursing profession and the public if it is carried out in the spirit in which it has evidently been conceived.

Royal British Nurses' Association.

(Incorporated by Royal Charter.)



As we go to press, we have received the Quarterly Journal of the Association. It contains much which is of the greatest importance to the Nursing profession, and which we hope to be able to discuss at considerable length next week.

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